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ABSTRACT

This digest is intended to help vocational educators learn to make the best use of the World Wide Web. Among the vocational education-related websites and uses of the web profiled are the following: a website that Minnesota high school students can use to search for career opportunities and check local classified ads; a website through which Australian workers can earn a Certificate in Workplace Leadership; a University of Idaho project that allows teacher educators to evaluate teachers in the field through the use of digital cameras, conduct chats related to classes, and conduct examinations and discussions through websites; a rural Ohio program in which students use the Internet to find specific materials related to their vocational programs; a website containing more than 200 manuals, curricula, and guides that have been created by local and state school-to-work offices; websites that a Florida tech prep/school-to-work coordinator uses to conduct a business education classes and help students develop job search skills; and a website containing lesson plans of a Massachusetts vocational high school and samples of students' work. Contains an annotated list of 15 relevant websites and 6 references. (MN)

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# The World Wide Web and Vocational Education
## ERIC Digest No. 186

Judith O. Wagner

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
Center on Education and Training for Employment
College of Education
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

by Judith O. Wagner

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# The World Wide Web and Vocational Education

*As Eric Parks says, 'I'm certain cybertechnology will replace all the other learning technologies that exist today.'* (Caudron 1996, p. 35)

The Internet is a network of networks including the World Wide Web (WWW), listservs, newsgroups, and discussion forums along with electronic mail and electronic journals. To help vocational educators make the best use of the web, this *ERIC Digest* updates an earlier digest (Wagner 1995) with suggestions for using the Internet in the vocational classroom and a list of websites of interest to vocational educators. It does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of vocational education resources on the Internet—that list changes daily. As in the earlier digest, much of the information that is included was received as a result of messages sent to several listservs asking how the Internet was being used in vocational education and corporate training. Previously, respondents indicated that they were just getting started and students were spending time surfing the Web, making use of electronic mail, and participating in listservs. The times they are a changin'! Now, in addition to all of the above, students are developing and maintaining websites, using digital cameras to evaluate teachers, delivering training to industry, and using materials found through Web searches.

A survey by Market Data Retrieval determined that approximately one-third of all public schools are online; that the larger the school, the more likely it is to use the Internet; and that the Internet is used mostly for research. If the integration of the Internet into the classroom is to be successful, teachers must be involved and work with it (Leiken 1996). The examples here show how vocational teachers and trainers are using the Internet.

## Examples of Current Use

It has been suggested that increased use of performance support systems, sophisticated computer simulations and multimedia training programs are changing and diminishing the role of the traditional corporate classroom (Wulf 1996). Companies are discovering that they can use the Internet to distribute information, resources, and learning tools to employees worldwide with relatively little end-user support (Caudron 1996).

A high school teacher in Minnesota has developed a website for use in doing career research. Students look for career opportunities on the Web and check the classified ads in the local newspaper, which is also on the Web (M. Savchenko, Internet message, July 3, 1997).

In Australia, the Certificate in Workplace Leadership is offered through the Web. Industry participants work with an Internet module and a textbook. Although text-driven, the tutor is online (M. Greig, Internet message, July 2, 1997).

The University of Idaho has a project designed to assist teacher educators with the evaluation of teachers in the field through the use of digital cameras. The technology allows them to supervise student teachers and demonstrate teaching and classroom management. They also use the Internet for chat groups related to classes, and newsgroups and websites are created for exams and discussion (J. McMurtry, Internet messages, July 1 and August 19, 1997).

In a rural area of Ohio, students use the Internet to search for specific materials related to their programs. They have found automotive specifications and tune-up tips, home design plans and insulation specifications, and cosmetology product and styling ideas (D. Fullerman, Internet message, June 30, 1997).

The National School-to-Work Office's Practical Tool page includes over 200 manuals, curriculum, and guides that were created by local and state STW offices. The materials are useful in starting new school-to-work partnerships (A. Santo, Internet message, June 30, 1997).

An instructor in Canada uses exam questions from the U.S. Coast Guard and an interactive tutorial on learning how to read a micrometer from the U.S. Navy. He also uses a file of a spinning engine to perk up his lectures (G. Bradshaw, Internet message, June 28, 1997).

A Tech Prep/School-to-Work Coordinator in Florida uses the websites of the Occupational Outlook Handbook, O*NET, and TrainingNet in her business education class. She has also used career information websites for classes related to creating resumes, cover letters, and other job search methods (M. Teachout, Internet message, June 28, 1997).

A business and industry education professor from the University of Minnesota has created a variety of websites for various teacher education courses. A team of teachers will be developing new activities and the sites are regularly updated (J. Lambrecht, Internet message, June 28, 1997).

Examples of lesson plans can be found on the website of a vocational high school in Massachusetts. It also includes samples of student work (N. Moran, Internet message, June 29, 1997).

The director of the business education program at Southern Illinois University uses the Internet in a variety of ways: to communicate with students, to review curriculum from other schools, to keep abreast of current issues, to review marketing strategies from other countries, to obtain shareware, to find statistics, and to locate student and professional materials and associations (M. Erthal, letter, August 4, 1997).

Among the advantages of using the Internet are the following (Glener 1996; N. Moran, Internet message, June 29, 1997; Wulf 1996): ease of modifying and distributing curriculum; ease of sharing information and collaborating; reduced costs of printing and mailing manuals and CD-ROMs; multimedia capability; quick development time; variety of capabilities; ease of updating; learner control; opportunity for interaction; and availability of excellent materials and programs. Some barriers to using the Internet include limited bandwidth, lack of sufficient up-to-date equipment, newness of authoring systems, unreliable links, and lack of Internet skills.

## Relevant Websites

**ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE)**: http://coe.ohio-state.edu/cete/ericacve/index.htm. ERIC/ACVE provides full text of *ERIC/ACVE Digests*, *Trends and Issues Alerts*, *Practice Application Briefs*, and *Myths and Realities*. It also includes general information on the ERIC system and links to all ERIC components and a variety of adult, career, and vocational education websites.

**National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE)**: http://ncrve.berkeley.edu/. The NCRVE site includes information about NCRVE, full text of many of their publications and newsletters, and links to other vocational education websites.

**National Business Education Association**: http://www.nbea.org/. NBEA includes standards, publication lists, membership information, conference and meeting information, scholarship information, and links to related sites.

**Professional Secretaries International (PSI)**: http://www.gvi.net/psi/. PSI provides information about the organization, certification, membership, products and services, and full text of some products.

**Vocational Education Resources**: http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~sorg/vocation.html. This site offers a vast array of links related to all aspects of vocational education including school-to-work/tech prep, research, federal government information, legislation, publications, career and job information, and training.

**Skill Standards Network, American Training Standards Institute**: http://steps.atsi.edu. The ATSI site provides information on projects, legislation, and standards.

**Office of Vocational and Adult Education**: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/. This U.S. Department of Education site includes information on funding, legislation, policy, school-to-work, press releases, and links to relevant sites.

**Skillsnet**: http://www.skillsnet.org. SkillsNET provides national and international trends, online technologies, publications, project descriptions, a research library, and links to other websites.

**South Dakota Department of Education**: http://seti.tec.sd.us/sdve/vocedsd.htm. This state site provides a calendar of events, excellent links, and other resources.

**O*NET**: http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/. This Department of Labor site replaces the outdated *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*. It includes information about job characteristics and worker attributes and provides links to other sites.

**Florida School-to-Work Information Navigator**: http://www.flstw.fsu.edu/. The Florida site includes information on grants and legislation, professional development, resources, a calendar of events, and links to other sites.

**School-to-Work National Office**: http://www.stw.ed.gov/. This government site includes hot topics, resources and tools, grant information, lists of technical assistance providers and state initiatives, and a calendar of events.

**ERIC Review on School-to-Work**: http://www.aspensys.com/eric/ter/stw/. Full text of *The ERIC Review* issue on school-to-work is available at this site.

**AskERIC Virtual Library and Other Resources**: http://www.askeric.org. This is a gateway to the resources of AskERIC including the AskERIC Virtual Library, a Q&A service, links to all ERIC components, and the searchable ERIC database.

**National Center for Education Statistics**: http://www.ed.gov/NCES/. This U.S. Department of Education site includes frequently asked questions, publications, and information about projects, data, and surveys.

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CENTER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
1900 Kenny Road • Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090